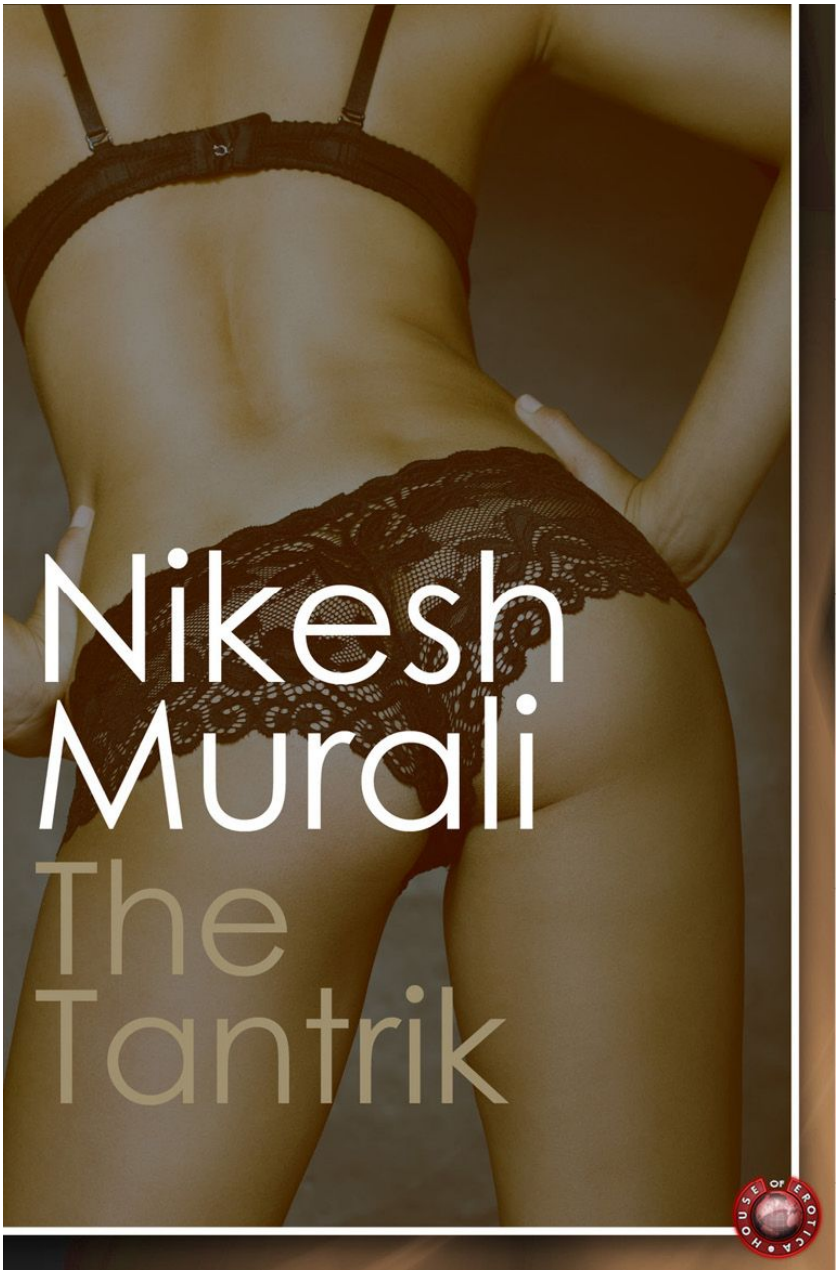
Nikesh
Murali
The
Tantrik
HOUSE OF EROTICA

Title Page

THE TANTRIK

Nikesh Murali

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Introduction

We are everlasting lover and beloved. We never separate. We are eternally husband and wife; never do we become mother and father. No offspring is seen in our lap. We are lover and beloved ever-embracing. In between us we do not permit any third creature demanding affection. Our life is a life of perpetual pleasure.

Adi Parva, Mahabharata

1

I have journeyed through bodies.

That is all you need to know about me. This could be in any city, any time. I don't believe in the constraints of time and space.

Presently, I am watching the maid. She dusts the bronze statues with delicate strokes. What has time got to do with the movement of her hands? What has space got to do with her sensual needs?

My estate is outside the city. I can see Oak trees from my window.

"Am I disturbing your reading?" Mariah asks me.

"Yes you are," I say, in a serious tone.

"Sorry sir, I will come back later."

I watch the corner of her mouth. I love women. I love their mouths.

"Stay Mariah. You are not disturbing me," I say, laughing.

She smiles timidly. I think she noticed me looking at her mouth.

"What are you reading today sir? Philosophy?"

"I am reading about a girl who likes to be blindfolded..."

"And?"

There is a fire in the room. There is a bridge of light.

"She does some very naughty things."

Mariah looks away. She works faster.

I go back to reading. I can't help but check out her hips.

There is a nice cafe next to a strawberry farm, about ten minutes from here. I feel like coffee. I feel like watching the rain through the windows of the cafe.

I feel like Mariah. I feel like her mouth. I feel like her wide hips. I want to drink a double shot latte from her wide mouth.

Mariah stops at the door that she is not supposed to open. The room she is not supposed to go into.

The room with the machine that helps me journey through bodies.

She stands in front of it in reverence. I detect an air of curiosity.

“Do you do that every day Mariah?”

“What sir?”

“Pause in front of the door?”

“No sir.”

She starts cleaning the door.

I place the book on the coffee table and wait for her question.

“If you don’t mind me asking. What is in there?”

“Just old things that belong to my father.” I give her a quick polite smile.

“Sorry to bring up bad memories.”

“Oh, it doesn’t matter. It was a long time ago.”

Mariah looks at me with sympathetic eyes.

“Can I have some water please?”

“Sure sir.” She heads off to the kitchen.

I wait for her to disappear and then I approach the door. I place a hand on the door.

I can sense its impatience. It craves another journey.

2

Her name is Pat, she says. Patricia.

She was smoking outside the convention centre. White wisps of smoke rising up towards the street lamp.

“You look like one of those rich, bored types,” she says to me.

“I am bored and I am rich.” I am impressed with her powers of observation.

She plays wheelchair basketball. I can tell from the grip as she shakes my hand.

Low cut V-neck top. Small, but perfect cleavage.

“Smokes?” she extends a pack.

“I don’t.”

“Cocaine?” She keeps the straight face for a second and bursts out laughing. “I am sorry I don’t have any.”

“I don’t need chemicals to get a high.”

“That is good way to be,” she says running her eyes all over my Tom Ford suit.

The sky is clear, so clear even the stars are hiding.

There is a mole on her collarbone. I like it. It is a small black planet that devours its many moons. Its magnetic core devours moons and cocks.

“You look exotic,” I say.

“Half native American, half Swedish.”

There is electricity in her jet-black hair. I want it to fall on my face, shield me from night terrors that are putrid forms of people I knew.

“You look alright yourself.” I thank her.

She inhales the smoke deep. Deep. Her perfect little tits push out. Her perfect little nipples advertise themselves. “Feels good,” she says as she exhales.

“Yes it does,” I agree. For other reasons.

“I hear the cocktails are good in the lounge bar.”

“So they tell me,” I smile.

Her jet-black hair eclipses the black planet on her collarbone. We go back in, part a sea of boring people. She is Moses on a wheel chair. I am a thirsty pilgrim. I am a very thirsty pilgrim who believes salvation is a shuddering scream.

3

The first memory I have of mother is her burning my hands. Actually, that is not the first memory I have of her, but I decided it would be my default first memory of that woman.

She had very pretty eyes, my mother. Full lips. Curly hair.

She would look at her wedding photograph and sigh at least few times a day. She hated mirrors.

I loved the warmth of her lap whenever she allowed me to rest on it, which was not often.

This brings me to the kitchen, her domain. She worked like a chef with a few helpers dishing out the most elaborate of breakfasts and lunches and dinners.

She took great pride in her work and when my father delivered unkind verdicts on her culinary delights, she didn't hesitate to empty the food she had so lovingly prepared on the expensive carpet. At which point my father would leap out of the chair, grab her by the hair and whack her on her neck and chest. She would scream and shout abusive words in response. The servants would hurriedly close the windows, not that we had any close neighbours. Accusations would ring through the manor, past offences.

Plates thrown against the wall.

Shattered china. Shattered mirrors.

"What are you sitting around for?" My father.

I knew it was my cue to exit.

"You unkind dog, sit there and eat." My mother.

I had to stay and witness their descent into hell.

On one particular occasion, I didn't speak to my mother for days. She ignored me when I saw her around the house.

Then I gave in to my desire for her touch. I often imagined what it would be like to crawl back into her womb away from the nastiness that I was birthed into. Her belly was soft, so there had to be a nest of feathers in there. I wanted to hide in it.

She was frying crispy sweets in the afternoon heat when I walked into the kitchen. It smelled good.

I heard her crying softly, so I moved close to her and gently touched her hips.

She grabbed my hand in one swift movement, placed it on the table and pressed the hot steel ladle onto my soft flesh. “You fucking traitor.”

Mother never forgets or forgives.

4

We met on one of those cheap dating sites that couldn't afford a web 2.0 logo.

Café on Mason Street.

Martha refuses to tell me what she does for a living. But the pink cardigan, crisp white shirt, brown skirt and the DKNY glasses scream - 'local library'.

Her profile name is bookilicious1983.

She is hugging a teddy bear in her profile photo. I am not interested in Ted E Bear. I want to gently bite her nose.

She likes vanilla chai, she says. It reminds her of the last months she spent with her dying mother, she says.

I smile sympathetically. I don't want to think about my own mother dying.

"So what do you think of this part of the town?" I ask her.

"There are more flowers in this part of the town. That and tasteful graffiti."

She looks at my Mercedes Benz car keys on the table. She shifts uncomfortably.

"I don't own an expensive sports car. It's a key chain my best buddy gave me." I didn't have any best buddies and I did have a sports car.

She drinks her Vanilla chai with closed eyes, I like that. Makes me think of comfortable couches.

Her large breasts are struggling against her clothing. I can tell she is one of those girls that moan a lot when you suck on them.

I imagine lying on her lap on a leather couch as it rains outside. I

kiss her breasts through her hello kitty t-shirt. It tickles her, she laughs and pushes my head away. I am persistent; I have an urgent need to run my tongue around her swollen nipples. I have a dream...

She finishes her drink, and her lovely breasts are tucked away safe and warm. Out of my reach. Without reason. I have a lovely tongue and I know how to use it.

“How is your coffee?”

“I was too busy looking at you to notice,” I say.

“What were you...admiring?”

“I was dreaming.”

“Looking or dreaming?”

“Sometimes they are one and the same.”

We walk around the block afterwards.

“There used to be a bookstore here,” I said.

“Charlie’s.”

“Yup, I used to go there all the time with my mother.”

“It’s moved now. Couple of blocks from here.”

“I would like to go there.”

“Let’s.”

I am watching her beautiful face. That innocence is most likely a charade. Those lips don’t mutter prayers on sweaty bed sheets.

At the bookstore, we browse. She checks out fiction, I pursue the memoir section.

I feel her hand on me after a while. I want her fingers to play with the small hairs on my chest.

“Did you find anything interesting?”

I extend the book that I am holding, towards her. Rita’s Carrion. Photograph of an orchid that looks like a vagina on its cover.

“What is it about?” She asks.

“You will have to find out.”

She looks surprised.

“Next time I meet you, you will have to read me your favourite bits,” I said.

I buy the book for her. She kisses my cheek and waves me good-bye.

I am still thinking of those fingers. What they would feel like when I suck on them one by one and then eventually ask her to warp them around my cock.

5

Kinnaras are celestial musicians in the court of the Sun God. They also excelled in dance and the art of seduction.

A strange combination of a human, horse and a predatory bird. They live to love and to lust and to love lust and lust love. And they live forever.

I first saw them on the walls of an Indian temple when I was 16. I was on a holiday to the subcontinent with my parents.

An old soothsayer wrapped in a saffron blanket, ash smeared all over her face, stopped me outside the temple.

“You have been cursed,” she said to me. My guide Raja translated.

He told me the old lady sensed my past birth. That I was a Kinnara who was cast to earth in human form for falling in love with one of the Sun God’s concubines, that I would wander the earth journeying through bodies, longing for her, till I found her in human form. The old woman said that pursuing my soul mate to remove the curse was complicated by the unidirectional flow of time. If only I could build a machine, she lamented.

I gave her some money and moved on. It was a cute story.

I forgot all about it till I started dreaming about a golden palace floating in outer space on my 18 th birthday.

The power of suggestion?

But what power it had. What strength of imagination drove the engine making it so real that I now believe it’s not an illusion, but another dimension that only I have privileged access to, from the mortal world.

In the dreams, my name is Mayank, and I am visited by a man with grey beard and white robe. His name is Aardran. His eyes have seen blood, his skin scalded by many battles under the sun, his hair grey from recurring nightmares.

“This is the abode of the Sun God,” he said.

“Who are you?”

“I am your handler.”

“Is it true that I am a Kinnara cursed to roam the earth?” I asked him.

“Yes it is.” He looked sad. “You were his favourite once, but….”

“What?”

“I can’t tell you, yet.”

“How can I remove the curse?”

“Build a machine. Become a Tantrik. Journey through souls.”

6

“Once a month,” she said to me.

“Once?”

“And even then...he is uncomfortable.”

Latha was a friend. We had known each other a long time. She did art at uni and I studied literature.

The scent of sandalwood oil rose from her olive skin. Her short brown hair was tied in a ponytail and her petite body looked perfect in the short black dress. Her lips were always in full bloom, but I got the distinct feel she had forgotten how to smile.

“So this is the guy who tried to woo you for ten years straight? A persistent man.”

“Romantic too. He sent me flowers every fortnight.”

“Now that the bee has been drawn to the flower.”

“Disappointment. He has no desire.” Her long eyelashes are sad, her black eyes sadder.

“How can that be? You are so beautiful.”

“Well, he never initiates it.”

“You have to force him?”

“Yes. He shows no emotion when he removes my clothes.”

“What?”

I am drinking whiskey. It’s a scotch kind of conversation.

“I am glad I didn’t make it to your wedding.”

“Marriage is a decrepit institution. Never get hitched.”

I look into the function room not too far from the bar. They are trying to break a speed dating record. Wonder how many would end up getting married. End up with Mr. and Mrs. ‘once a month’.

“It withers real fast. It is a doomed flower growing on the slopes of a raging volcano.”

I pour myself another drink. “It is sad to see you like this.”

“I have forgotten what it feels like to be desired.”

I touched her shoulder, feel her warmth radiate through the clothes. We were lovers once, briefly before she went chasing a photography job in New York.

“You were, are and always will be desirable. Just ask me,” I smiled.

“I will take you home tonight and sketch you,” she said, looking pleased.

“Just like old times,” I said finishing my drinks.

7

When I was 17, a distant relative of my mother came to live with us. She was 5 years older than me.

Reva hailed from a poor family of five.

When my mother got cross with Reva, she made it a point to mention how she was doing her family a favour.

I had warmed up to her company. She liked listening to my tapes and browsing my bookshelves.

It was a pleasure to be in the presence of her luscious lips, and her tempting hips and that lovely, shapely ass, gorgeously showcased in short, tight skirts. She was breaking hearts when she sashayed around the manor, under the pretence of helping my mother.

Her eyes were innocent doves and her skin resembled white petals of iridescent flowers of the night. Straight blonde hair like a golden waterfall that chased her gait.

I had seen hunger in my father's eyes for her and I did not approve of his intentions.

Reva was my friend. She was one of the few people who cared for me in this large prison.

Mother was on the phone to the Army man. He is a friend, she said. She can open her heart to him, she said.

Last night, the bed was creaking for a while in my parent's room. Then I heard sounds of discontent. My father exited shutting the door with a loud bang that thundered through the house.

I went back to sleep with the knowledge that another storm was brewing.

When I woke up, my mother was on the phone in the kitchen, crying.

“I can’t come, you know I can’t come,” she said.

She made some pancakes for me as she talked and I ate quietly, watching her move, her body perfectly translating the anger she felt.

When I finished, I ran upstairs looking for Reva.

She was asleep.

I lay next to her. She made a small noise and shifted gently, her eyes shut.

I giggled.

She gave a small sleepy smile and went back to her dream.

I wondered what she was dreaming about - maybe her house in the hills.

She was breathing calmly.

I hugged her, but because of the angle we were lying in, my hand cupped the side of her breast.

It felt good.

8

The cocktail party was too boring. Patricia looked at me after her third blue vesper and said, “I would much rather drink at home. The Armanis and Guccis are making me want to throw up.”

I nod. I know an invitation when I see one and I don’t hesitate to take the keys out of my pocket to show that I accept.

I help her into the front seat of my Audi and fold up the wheelchair and place it in the boot.

Small talk in the car is about how much some of the suburbs have changed in the last 10 years.

“I used to play soccer there with my schoolmates when I had my legs,” she said pointing to a fenced off park.

“Aren’t you going to ask me how I lost use of my legs?”

“I don’t care,” I said.

Her apartment is on the ground floor, she rolled her wheelchair up the ramp as fast as she could.

“Good exercise,” she said.

I closed gates behind, I opened doors for her.

The furnishing in the apartment is second hand Ikea but she has an eye for good art. Surreal meets gothic in a weird and wonderful way. I am transfixed.

There is a blonde streak on her jet-black hair, reminded me of a female comic book hero.

I check out the trophies on the wall.

“I am going to Turkey next year for the international championships.”

“I am impressed.”

Photos of her, aggressive on the court. Write-ups in the local newspaper about her achievements.

“You are my hero.” I said.

“Wait till you see what I can do with my mouth.”

She poured scotch for both of us.

I sat on one of the couches; she rolled her chair close to me.

“Take it out, let me see it,” she said pointing to my crotch.

I opened my zipper and presented my cock to her. There was a bit of pre cum on the tip. Her red lipstick had been teasing me for a while.

She grabs it with her hand and gives it a gentle squeeze. Then she runs her hand up and down it and feels the weight, as it grew.

I felt my muscles tighten; I felt a fire growing in my groin.

She traced one of the veins on my foreskin with a smile.

“Now play with it,” she said, as she rolled back and watched me from a distance.

I stroke it gently at first.

She channelled her inner voyeur goddess.

My strokes got faster with her breathing.

There was lust in her eyes, thirst on her lips. “Mmmmm.”

I felt the need to explode, climb up the shaft of my cock.

She bit her lips and clutched her wheelchair.

I couldn’t stop what was coming. I tried. I wished she would command me to pour it in her mouth.

“Oh,” she said. “Beautiful.”

“Ahhh,” I screamed, squeezing the end of my cock.

“I want you to come,” she shouts. “Come hard for me.”

She moved close to me and watched with delight as I pump cum into my palm.

9

Martha reads a passage from ‘Venus’s Carrion’.

She is immersed in the text, her blue eyes tracing their shapes with lust.

Her spectacles are pressed close to the top of her nose. I can see the words reflected on the glass.

We are seated on a bench in a public park; the joggers slow down as they near us and labour to pass us, as they strain to catch her cute teenager voice.

I kept the bottle of lube close to me.

“Use it liberally and encourage other to do so,” I said to Hashim.

“Don’t worry darling,” he said.

He blindfolded me and my world was an ocean of senses. I could smell them, four men, naked and stroking their organs.

I had screened them all individually after advertising on a swinger’s forum.

I am writing this book on alternate sexual practices. I didn’t want to come across as a charlatan. Authenticity is everything when you write non-fiction. I was never one for writing lies as those novelists do.

Each of you will get ten thrusts each, I had informed them in their acceptance email. Please submit a current certificate from a sex clinic so that you don’t give me any nasties. This is a onetime experiment; I don’t want to come out of this a loser.

I don’t think the first person to enter me was Hashim.

The man grabbed both my ass cheeks as he fucked me. I was counting strokes at first, but I did not stop him when he crossed ten. He pulled out and someone else started banging me.

I made a mental note of the sensations. Humiliation first, dread next, pleasure, then guilt, then pleasure.

Then a sense of deep sadness.

After the second guy, I said, “Stop. I want you guys out of here.”

I heard footsteps and the door opened and then closed.

I removed my blindfold.

Hashim stood in a corner watching me, his big pecs and bulging biceps, more defined in the dim lighting.

I spread my legs and instructed Hashim to come forward, “I have been bad girl.”

Tears roll down my cheek.

He takes me in his arms and kisses me deeply.

He holds me like that for what seems like sweet forever.

10

I like listening to classical music on the radio.

I go up to the second floor and sit in front of the large windows overlooking the gardens and listen to composers who names I don't care for.

I switch on the player and tune into the blue sky over our estate. Clouds in the sky become objects of contemplation - the Zen of water vapour.

The music soars. The windows are closed but I can see the wind picking up outside.

I look at the flowers in the garden to the east. Daffodils and roses and the man who fixes our cars with his finger up Reva's skirt.

Her mouth is wide open and eyes closed in bliss.

I tear down the stairs. In my excitement to take two stairs at a time, I tear my shorts.

I run into one of the servants at the bottom, who asks me where I am going in a hurry. I mumble a nonsensical excuse and make my way to the hedges on the side of the garden.

The man had gotten rid of his moustache since the last time I saw him. He looked younger.

He moves his finger in and out of Reva. She is leaning against one of the sculptures, moaning and clutching the stone. He is talks to her softly, the muscles on his neck straining as he plays with her.

"You want it faster?"

"No just like that," she says.

She digs her nails into his hand. He smiles with deep satisfaction.

She gets louder and louder. A warm surge of molten desire moves

up and down my crotch. I feel faint. Her sounds become the music from the radio. His wet fingers my object of contemplation. My mouth is dry, dry. It needs a drink from between her legs, now.

He sucks on her lips to muffle out the sound.

I finally notice the bulge in his pants.

Up and back. In and out. My undies are wet.

The man turns to the side and spots me. “The lad,” is all he says as she shudders and screams.

11

Latha is perched on a stool working on her canvas, watching me lay naked on her couch.

She hasn't painted a single stroke in the last 15 minutes. She rotates the brush in her hand

"Can I have some water?"

She doesn't respond. She traces her eyes from my muscular chest to my tummy, and further down.

"Water?"

She snaps out of her trance. "Sure."

She heads to kitchen. I smile.

When she comes back with the glass, we talk about her next exhibition. She never made much money out of her art.

"I never sold any of your nudes," she said.

"Why would anyone purchase paintings of an unattractive naked man?"

"Stop that nonsense Mr. Hunk."

"So where is it?"

She smiled.

I could imagine a basement full of naked paintings of me.

"I am not going to tell you."

"What if your husband chances upon this stash?"

She gets off the chair and plants herself on the couch next to me.

I twist her wedding ring while whistling a bossa nova tune I heard

somewhere on an elevator.

The sun is setting over the water. Somewhere naked drawings of me sleep under white bed sheets waiting to be liberated.

She plays with my belly button.

I hope her fingers would travel lower. Slowly remove my pants. Feel the bulge in my Calvin Klein; stroke it to a hardness that she can't resist.

And then...

Latha gets up and goes back to the stool to paint me.

12

The manor is quiet. The only thing that is crackling with life in this mausoleum is the fireplace. I should get a Great Dane. Long limbed and lazy, there would at least be its panting to compete with the fire.

I exit the room and walk along the long corridor in the darkness trying to make out shapes. The house is full of artefacts that are orphans.

I take the stairs to the first floor and head straight to what used to be my father's study. He read a lot of war history and the room is full of model airplanes.

I can hear the dogfights and the bombing runs to this day. I sense the sadness of the miniature representations.

A history of blood is recorded in the green tomes in the bookshelves. I am angry about what happened to my father. He is gone, yet the tomes remain, a constant reminder of what transpired in the room.

The morning I found him dead, the day of blood and retribution, his eyes were fixed on the shelves. My mother had bashed his head in with a bronze statue of a World War two pilot and slipped into the night, never to be seen again.

I had to do something about the books.

Memory is a bad place, an asylum for events in straitjackets. My madhouse is overflowing with patients. I have to build a new wing every few months to cope.

I take the lift down to the underground garage. It has to be the Mustang again. The old man loved it.

As soon as the automatic shutter is up, I tear down the path, onto the open road.

I speed on the straight stretches. The local cops know my car, they

never bother.

I race up hills and winding roads.

A deer steps in front of the lights from nowhere and my window cracks on impact as the animal rolls over my car and is left somewhere behind me, on the road.

There is blood everywhere.

The spider web cracks on the front are modern art in red.

I push down on the accelerator, the light beams tear through the gloom.

The wind is screaming, so am I. It feels normal.

I scream and I scream. I need to burn those bloody books.

I feel better already. I hated the man. I just needed to know I still did.

13

Pat is playing at the Hyperdome. She invites me to the game.

She is a real dynamo on the court. Some of her opponents steer clear of her as she advances to score points; such is the ferocity in her eyes.

They win by 10.

She texts from the changing rooms that she wants to head to a strip club. Her favourite one is called Madam Woo's

She refuses to let me start the car in the parking lot. She can best described as a ferocious kisser. Her hands run up and down my thighs as she eats my lips.

We finally leave when someone unlocks a car next to us. We giggle like teenagers all the way to the club.

The large neon display says Madam Woo's in red, blue and green, and features a girl bending down to reveal her ample bosom.

When we step inside, an old Chinese man with his hair dyed blonde greets Pat like a valued regular customer.

"Good to see you honey," he says and ushers us both in.

"How many times do you come here every month?" I ask her.

"7 maybe 8."

We head straight for one of the private seating area - velvety pink affair with white lace curtains and heart shaped cushions.

"Is this your new boyfriend?" he asks Pat.

"No, we just fuck," she says and then winks at me

"Yes I am the new fucker," I respond.

She laughs and slaps me on the thigh.

“What will it be for drinks?” he asks.

I order shots.

“Bonita will be here soon,” the man says to Pat and leaves us.

We didn’t have to wait too long.

Bonita steps in and kisses Pat on both cheeks. A Latino bombshell with the knockers that God made on the German side of the factory.

“The usual, Pat?”

“Yes, with a friend to play along.”

Bonita puts on a Latino hit that I recognise from the radio.

Pat squeezes my hand. I can tell she can’t wait for the fun to begin.

Bonita shakes her booty, her hips gyrate to the music, her tits bounce and jiggle.

Before I know the bra has come off and those lovely puppies are rubbing against my face then Pat’s, and back and forth. Soft rain on my face.

Pat instructs Bonita to take off her undies and she obliges, even giving me a sniff of the pink G-string. They smell like lavender.

Bonita straddles me and rubs her crotch on my erection. I get harder every time she moves on me.

Pat grabs the side of my hair and presses her mouth against mine. A deep kiss.

I probe her tongue with mine. Wet and the texture of urgency.

A topless waiter brings drinks.

I grab a shot glass, sit back on the couch and let the liqueur burn deep.

Pat and Bonita say cheers and down a few as well.

“Are you shy?” Pat asks me.

“What for?”

“About having a feed.”

I look at her with a puzzled expression.

Here’s my favourite bit Pat says, before placing Bonita’s right nipple in her mouth. I watch her suck on it hungrily. I latch onto Bonita’s left nipple gently with my teeth.

The night is deep throbbing music and faint red light and three bodies seeking its pulse.

Bonita giggles and strokes the back of my hair.

I wish this night never ends, but when the hour is up Bonita leaves with a satisfied smile and a fat wad of cash.

Pat and I sit there for another hour, drinking and talking about good old times and I wonder why she never lets me fuck her.

This is a game we have been playing for a while now.

14

Reva refused to make eye contact for days. I didn't know being curious was such a crime.

She never used to wear coats when we went out to the mall or to the cricket league, but now she made sure she was always covered up, even in the heat. This made me more curious.

She was quieter than usual, withdrawn and disturbed.

I wanted to know all her secrets. Everything hidden within her coat.

I fantasised about her olive skin when I showered. The beautiful apple bottom. The tiny mole on the left side of her face close to her eyes. Brown hair spilling over her shoulders, long and wavy, always reflecting the light.

I replayed the scene again and again in my head. Reva being fingered in the garden. I wondered what it felt like. I craved for the wetness on his fingers.

Reva, her body shivering with delight, her mouth drawing in quick gulps of air.

I had masturbated to naked pictures in magazines before. But Reva was a beautifully scripted movie in my head. Much better than any photograph.

And she was real. I had access to her. I felt lust for the first time in my life.

I spent more time than usual in the bathroom and my mother noticed. Tissues piled up in the dustbin under my study desk.

I had to reach her. I was sure my knowledge of her sin, gave me privileged access to her desires. I was even prepared to blackmail her.

My Reva, the one I so cherished. My only friend in his wretched house.

I was prepared to sacrifice anything to partake in the feast that the man had been offered some weeks ago. I had more right than him to do so anyways.

Men think with their dicks I had heard my mother say. In those days I actually did believe my mother.

My obsession with the space between her legs was tearing my body apart.

One night I crept out of bed, gently opened her door and watched her sleep, the moonlight illuminating her form. She looked so innocent.

I tip toed to the side of her bed. Her mouth was slightly open, her breasts rose and fell with her breathing. I garnered all the strength in my soul, placed one hand on her left breast and kissed her gently on the right one.

She woke up with a start and took a moment to process what was happening. She slapped me across the face with a ferocity I relished. I wanted her to do it again, but I walked away.

15

Martha insists on pouring the wax all over my hand.

We had a candle light dinner. I made Korean barbecued pork served with Kimchi and a bowl of steamed rice. Beer, sake, some hoppy.

“You are a good chef, would love to taste some of your other dishes.”

“More sake?”

“I will have some wine thanks.”

I had just passed her the glass of wine and sat down next to her when she grabbed the candle and poured hot wax on my hand.

“Ouch.”

She giggled. “Do you like pain?”

“No,” I said. “Not in a sexual way.”

She watched the molten wax dry on my skin and then scraped it off, pulling out some of my body hair in the process.

I pulled an ‘I am not so impressed’ face.

“Awww,” she said, “don’t be like that. Here let me make it better for you.”

She gets me out of my cream jacket and then unbuttons my Van Heusen. She runs her hand on my torso, “I love that bit of hair on your chest.”

“You are not going to pour wax are...”

Before I could finish my sentence, she grabbed the last candle and deposited its molten contents on my chest.

She giggled. I grabbed both her hands and pushed her down on the couch.

She let out a scream of a pleasure.

“You like it rough?”

“Not tonight. But I will text you soon my sore man,” she said.

I pulled her close to me and kissed her. What is your game?

Her teeth latched onto my tongue and she pulled it out of my mouth and then she sucked on it.

She then straightened her dress, put some lipstick on and left with her high-heeled shoes in her hand. She didn’t even say goodbye.

16

This is my dream world. It is a golden palace floating in space.

I am in the throne room and the place is absolutely wrecked - a crater in the middle of the marble floor, shattered pillars and ornamental fixtures melted into intricate forms.

“What happened here?” I ask Ardran, the old handler.

“There was a revolt. Children, rallying against their father.”

He had a penchant for being cryptic. I pressed him for some more information but he remained mum.

We walked out into an open courtyard covered with creepers and wild flowers. There were tall wooden beams everywhere that bore marks made from swords. Giant racks on the walls with weapons that had lost their edge.

“We were soldiers?”

“That too. A Kinnara is a master of all trades. He is great artist, fighter, lover and musician.”

“Hence the training. To make us the best.”

“Not all of you made it through the gruelling training.”

“What do you mean?”

“Those who perished were led to the divine tree of life, Kalpaka, and rebirthed.”

He led me through a garden that was overgrown with weeds. We waded through waist high grass to reach an ancient tree that spread its massive branches and roots across the ruins. The bark was shrivelled like dead skin and red amber had dried up on it like mortal wounds. Kalpaka was devoid of leaves, but dwarfed by its immensity, I had no difficulty imagining what it would have looked like in its glory days.

At the base of the tree was a pool that had dried up and it was covered in black muck.

Aardran touched me on the crown of my head and a vision bloomed in my mind's eye - a younger Aardran carrying a wounded, naked man and placing him in the viscous white fluid of the pool. He then chanted mantras with folded hands.

After a while, a young boy rose from the pool, covered in the same white fluid. He wandered blindly towards the tree and suckled from one of the tendrils.

He rose and bowed to the tree. "Mother," he said.

Then he turned around and looked in the direction of the golden palace, its golden spires gleaming in his eyes. "Father," he said.

17

Latha and I are in Thailand. She organised the trip. I turned up.

“He used to tell me we will travel the world before we got married. But he never made the effort.”

She puts her hand on mine and smiles and says, “But I am glad you are here.”

“Me too.” An auto rickshaw zooms past us spewing black smoke.

The walls of the temple are like the pages of a pornographic magazine. Only better. There is no Photoshop. I particularly liked the one where a voluptuous woman is churning milk while a skinny slave stimulates her clitoris.

Latha snaps them with her camera. Click, whirr, click, whirr, click.

The corridors of the temple are dark and cold; the granite floor like the skin of a slumbering demon. There is a small pool covered with lotus in the middle of the complex. Latha sits on the edge splashing the green water with her legs. Little fish chase the movement and ripples bring unrest to the leaves floating on the surface.

She looks at me and smiles as I snap a few photos of her.

When we get back to the motel, a storm threatens the sky. Latha is hungry for me. She tears my shirt away.

“I love your arms,” she says as she strokes my biceps.

She pulls me to the bed. I watch her big lips and her eager eyes.

“Do you not want me?”

I place my mouth on hers and drink her in. Her nails claw at the back of my head.

She has innocent eyes. I look into them as I slip into her wet pussy.

“I am free,” she says.

I don’t know what she means but I thrust deep and she gasps.

The storm bears upon the leaking roofs of the old town. Latha’s shouts of pleasure compete with the noisy rain. Our shadows sculpted on the wall, alive and vibrant.

She churns my cock by moving her hips. I bang her slow then hard. Slow, then slower, hard then harder.

My shoulders get a good stretch as I press against the wall. She raises her hips to meet me.

I stretch her legs wider and pound her with all my strength. The bed is a noisy beast.

She screams my name and spurts warm love all over me. There is nothing like a woman ejaculating on your thighs and your cock, in shuddering surrender.

18

Patricia is with me at my holiday house on the beach. We are in our underwear.

I am drinking Glenfiddich and she is nearly done with her first bottle of Kiss and Tell.

“This is nice,” she says.

I am transfixed by the ocean. I am pissed off I can’t see beyond the horizon.

“What’s bothering you?”

“Nothing serious. A little trouble out west in one of my factories.”

She moves the wheel chair forward and touches my forearm.

I finish my scotch and pour her the last of the moscato, but she places it on the table and pulls my arm.

“Stand up!”

I am good at following orders.

She examines me like a doctor. Then holds both side of my hips and flicks her tongue just below my belly button and then circles the depression in my belly that once connected me to my mother.

“I love it when you watch me from up there,” she says. “I love the way you look at me. Hopeful. Wondering what my next move is.”

She gently bites my cock through the underwear. Her teeth travel from the base to the tip.

“Someone is getting excited,” she says.

She moves down to my balls. Rubs her face vigorously against it and laughs.

“Are you having fun down there?”

“Let me take your worries away,” she says.

She laughs like an angel discovering the wonder of a night full of fireflies for the first time.

She pulls the underwear down in one quick move and before I know she is peeling back my foreskin and rapidly slurping on the head of my cock.

I let out a slow moan.

She takes the cue and moves her hands to the back of my ass and pushes me in deep into her throat.

“All of it.” I command her.

And she takes every inch of me. Deep, deep, my dick in her pink mouth.

“All of it.”

My cock is primordial life suspended in the warmth of her mouth. This is that moment of creation you will never find in holy books. On the 8 th day, he created pleasure.

She pulls me out. Her eyes watering.

“You are so big in my mouth,” she says.

She puts me back in and sucks me exactly 9 times before pulling me out. 9 lollipop sucks. 9 times.

I come deep in her mouth and she keeps the throbbing, ejaculating cock pressed firmly against the top of her mouth with her tongue.

She pulls it out and says, “Yum.”

We laugh together. I notice it is something we do a lot with each other. Smile and laugh.

19

“Why was I punished?” I ask Aardran.

We are on top of a watchtower that looks over the devastation of the golden palace and its surroundings - the abode of the Sun God. Damaged from projectiles and covered in what looked like black rust and overgrown with creepers - a decrepit tomb of a glorious age.

“You will find all the answers you seek, in time. First you must build the machine.” Mayank says.

This was starting to piss me off. I started pacing. I clenched my fist and smashed the walls.

“What machine? I don’t want to build anything. What for? To keep you amused old man!”

“If you don’t, you won’t be able to travel through souls and if you don’t travel, you won’t find the answers you so badly seek.”

“Are you for real?”

“I live in your dreams. I don’t know how to answer that.”

“But, you said this was all real.”

“That is correct. I have only spoken the truth.”

I shook my head.

He asked me to extend my hand and when I did, he scratched my forearm with his long sharp nail.

“Ow.”

The narrow red slit on my arm turned red and then blue and then healed itself in a matter of moments.

“What have you done to me?”

“You will be guided to the parts you need to make the machine.”

When I woke up, I thought I saw a shadowy figure materialise out of the wall and then slip back in. I wasn’t scared, I was used to living with ghosts.

It had been a year since that wretched night, a year since my parents died.

I got up and slipped my shoes on. The skin on my left forearm tingled and burned slightly.

There was something I needed to do.

I put on a robe and stepped out into the dark night with a torch in my hand.

I was a mere puppet in a mysterious game of fates.

I crossed the garden; walked past the fountain propped by little angry cherubs and reached the grove on the western side of the house. The wind picked up and I had to tighten the robe to keep off the chill.

I shone the light around and before long spotted the first rock. Flat on one side and pointed on the other, odd, functional like some sentient being had carved it for mysterious reasons.

My spirit followed my body in its night quest to find the strangely shaped rocks, identical in shape and the obscurity of their purpose.

Once I had spotted all 5 of them, I brought them back home in a wheelbarrow.

20

Martha wants to be slapped hard on her bottom. She is lying face down on the dining table, exposing her round ass to me. Red welts crisscross her pale white skin.

We celebrate pain in this house.

“There is this place downtown,” she says as I smack her. “Where you shag while others watch.”

“You want us to go there?”

“Will you take me? Will you. Please.”

“I will have to think about it.”

“You are such a tease.”

I lube her asshole with my saliva. She is giggling.

“What is so funny?”

More giggles.

My forefinger hovers at the entrance gently.

“You have to lick me now,” she says.

I lick her hole in a slow deliberate circle and I gently push my finger in.

“It’s nice and tight,” I whisper.

“Is it? Do you like how tight it is?”

I gently slap her ass cheeks. More giggles.

I pour some lube into her and then slip two fingers in. She moans.

“I am going to stretch it now. Is that ok?” I say.

“Yeah.”

I pull my fingers apart gently. Her hole stretches reluctantly. I put a third finger in and push it deep in.

“Are you going to give it to me? Are you going to fuck my ass?” she asks.

“I am prepping it before I put my black cock inside you.”

“You tease,” she says. “You are going to kill me with the suspense.”

I put my fourth finger in. Martha moans and squirms.

I let my fingers bloom like a flower and stretch her further.

“Ooh.”

I pull my fingers out and my erect cock is throbbing and raring to be inside her.

I place the head at the entrance of her hole. And she pushes back to slip it in.

She moans her complaint.

I slap her hole with my hardness.

“I can’t,” she says, almost as an afterthought.

I plunge inside her slippery wet ass and press in deep. Her fingers dig into the wood almost taking bits off it.

I am an animal pounding her sweet ass. She tells me she wouldn’t have it any other way.

I love the way her tight flesh wraps around me as I penetrate her.

“Yes, yes, yes,” she confirms.

I pull myself all the way out and push it into her and this drives her mad.

Again and again, I enter her with ferocity than cannot be chained.

She comes hard, the muscles in her ass squeezing me to the point where I spurt my cum inside her and when I pull out, it flows out of her like a waterfall.

“I never knew, I could come like that,” she says.

21

Mother has just punched a hole in the glass. She pulls her hand out and a goes for it again.

She is venting her anger on a showcase full of china more expensive than a luxury SUV.

Blood drops form strange shapes on the ground. Blood laces the jagged edge of broken glass. Blood sprays from my mother's wrists like crimson prisoners.

"You hate me and my brothers. You hate my sick mother. You prick!" She tells my father.

"I have borne you a child and tended to your guests and wasted my life being your arm candy. And all I have received is hate and derision. You would never find anyone like me."

"Don't give me that bullshit." My Father hits back. "Your family has been leeching my wealth for a while now. Who do you think paid for the weddings of your two darling brothers?"

My mother slams her head into the glass. I am stuck in the middle of all this.

She falls to the ground. A tiny piece of glass is embedded on her forehead.

I am in shock.

My mother extends her bloody hand towards me, "Come here son, don't cry."

I can't see because of the tears. My legs feel like jelly.

"There is nothing wrong with me. I am ok," she says. Blood trickles down from her facial wound.

I start sobbing.

My father looks down at me with disgust. “Stop crying like a girl. Get out of here.”

I feel Reva’s arms under my armpits. She leads me away. For a second I am superman with a broken heart.

She takes me to the back verandah that looks onto the corral, where the horses stand around as if nothing has happened. She sits on one of the couches and plonks me beside her and hugs me.

She says to me, “It’s ok. It’s ok darling. Nothing happened.’

The sky is a light shade of grey and the sun is too bright through the thin clouds. The wild flowers hanging from the hooks on the roof’s edge sway gently. They are a muted yellow and muted red and muted green.

Reva hugs me tighter. “I am here you have nothing to worry about.”

I kiss her forearm then her fingers and my tears and saliva stick on them like stubborn desire.

She presses her chin on top of my head and gently rocks me. I can feel her warm breath.

I feel Ok. I don’t want to. I want to die in fact. But for now I feel ok.

22

Latha wants me to spend Christmas with her in Dubai.

“I have my own place,” she says.

“I thought you said your husband was thinking of visiting from London.”

“That is what he always says. I am pretty sure he won’t turn up.”

“You just like the danger.”

She looks away.

We are parked on a hill that looks over the city. Lights dot the nightscape and orange roads snake through its dark secrets.

I place a hand on her leg. She pushes it away.

“Ok,” I say placing the key in the ignition.

“Thanks for spoiling a great evening.”

Live music followed by a seafood dinner at Taze was special indeed. I couldn’t see how I had spoiled it.

We drive to my pad in the city. As soon as I park the car in my reserved bay, she storms out and takes the lift.

By the time I get up to the penthouse, she is lying on the dewan, her slinky pearl white dress riding up her thighs. The furrows on her forehead betray the foul mood she is in. Her eyes are closed but she is not asleep.

I head for the bar and make two drinks with vodka, limejuice and a whole lot of ice.

Then I join Latha. I touch her leg, but she moves it away.

She is silent. I fail to notice the tears.

“Ok, I will drink this by myself.”

I am surprised to hear her sob. “I tried. I tried hard to be a good wife. I did everything to make him happy. I waited for him to change.”

“What has brought this on?”

She switches sides and places her head on my lap.

“I am alone.” Her tears burrow through my clothing and warm the skin on my thigh.

“No you are not. I am here for you.” I stroke her hair all night till she stops crying and falls asleep.

23

“Tonight’s the night,” Patricia says.

“What about tonight?”

“I never let you fuck me all these nights.”

“Ok?”

“You didn’t wonder why?”

“No.”

“I sucked you off. But I never let you…”

“It’s ok.” I pressed resume movie on the DVD menu.

“Pause it.”

She rolls the chair into my bedroom. I sat on the couch watching her.

“Are you coming?”

When I reached the room she was sitting next to the bed with her top off.

“What is this game you are playing?” I ask her.

“I don’t play games.”

I don’t believe her.

“Switch off the light,” she says.

“But I like looking at your breasts.” They were small but perfectly formed with dark nipples.

“Off!”

I oblige. She climbs onto the bed and removes her skirt and lays

down on the bed

“I want you,” she says.

I wet my fingers with my saliva and run them from her belly button, slowly down her public bone till I reached her clitoris

She gasps.

I slowly massaged the flesh around her clit.

She moans in pleasure.

“Put it in me.”

I spit on my fingers again and push it into her. She is wet and slippery. She doesn’t need more lube.

I stroke the upper wall of her pussy.

“There,” she says, “Right there.”

I yearn to see her face in the dark. I run my free hand on her face. She grabs hold of it and sucks my fingers.

I pull my finger out and play at the entrance of her vagina.

“You tease. You are killing me,” she says.

I thrust my fingers back in again and finger fuck her. I go faster and faster till her body goes tight and I feel a warm gush of juice flowing from inside her, all the way down to my wrist. She had created a small sculpture of a maelstrom where her fingers scrunched up the sheet.

I kiss her passionately and she responds with serenity.

I take her left cheek between my lips and press it gently, then land quick kisses all the way down to her neck. I bite into its softness.

She strokes my hair.

I draw circles on her neck with my tongue.

She places her hand on my hips and pulls me towards her. I take the cue.

I enter her gently; let her feel every inch of my cock. She gasps in surprise.

I push into her deeper. I melt away in its softness. I lay there on top of her like that for a minute, kissing her ear and the side of her head.

Then I pull out and put it back in again and again. Gentle strokes that are encouraged by her nails that travel on my back in random patterns, raising goose bumps wherever they went.

We do this all night. Without coming, just feeling the friction of our desire rub against each other and burn in its flames. All night.

24

I am in the garden, about to open a letter from a prestigious university that could possibly take me far away from the hell that is my home.

It was a particularly warm day; even the birds have gone lazy with their songs. Somewhere in the distance I can hear dogs barking. The postman doing his rounds after depositing this envelope in my hand.

The sun heats up the ground beneath my feat, most of my body is in the shade provided by trees in the orchard.

“What are you waiting for?”

Only one person can sound that sweet.

Reva stands in front of me in a pink top and black skirt and I can see that she doesn’t have a bra. Her nipples tease me from within.

She has changed. This is not the Reva who was holding back from me.

She has no shoes, so her feet start to burn.

“Ow, ow,” she says lifting one feet and then another. Repeating the movement and running around in circles. I can’ help but laugh.

She heads towards the large fountain and jumps in.

“Do you feel better now?” I shout.

“Yes, much better.”

I place the envelope on the side and raise my knees up to my chest and watch Reva play in the water. Her blouse is wet and clinging to her skin, her nipples now clearer than before, enticing me.

I feel the initial pangs of desire, but I calm myself down. Reva is a good friend; she shares the burden of my misery. I didn’t want to

destroy that.

“Come join me,” she screams.

“No I prefer to sit here.”

“Come on my shy boy. Don’t be like that.”

She jumps out of the fountain and marches towards me, the water weighing down her skirt. She sits next to me.

I remove some of the wet strands from her face.

She places one hand on my thigh and another on the side of my face.

What has changed?

“Reva, if I open that card and I have to go far away will you miss me.”

“Yes I will. A lot,” she said. A tinge of sadness creeping into her voice, the light in her eyes dimming.

“Really?”

“I will be happy for you as well,” she says looking up at the house.

Her hand lingers on my crotch.

I take her face in my hands and kiss her deeply.

She responds with a hunger that surprises me.

Her tongue touches mine, we share saliva.

My hand travels down to her blouse.

She blocks my attempt to unbutton her shirt.

She unzips my pant and pulls out my erect member. “I have been wanting to see this for a while.”

“You are full of surprises. I wouldn’t have known.”

She begins stroking me and her smiled grows wider.

She watches me raise my eyes up to the heaven. She squeezes my cock harder and the pressure drives me wild. The friction of her hand moving up and down is bliss.

The summer grew brighter.

It builds up in me like a fury and travels up the shaft of my cock and I spill my seed on her hand.

I decide I am not going to open the cover. I need Reva more than I need a refuge.

25

Latha was a silent during our trip to the airport.

I watched the tall lampposts pass by without any emotion and waited for the airport tower to appear in the horizon.

She had asked if I was going to visit her in Dubai.

“I am not sure. Depends on how busy things get.”

“Ok.” She didn’t sound pleased.

She is wearing a long black dress, tight on her body. A single enamel ring on her left forefinger. No wedding ring.

20 minutes to boarding.

“Do you remember the time we were at that fort in Rajasthan?” I said.

“We snuck in when the guard had gone to take a leak.”

“Yeah, that was a good night.”

Flash of memory - Latha in Rajasthan, sitting on a sandstone bench telling me she has no underwear.

“I don’t have a condom with me.”

“I am not on the pill,” she said.

By then her clothes were riding up to her thigh and my cock was pressing against her wetness and we knew there was no turning back and we made love like a bunch of sex starved teenagers.

Her moans echoed through the fort.

I tore her clothes in a few places driven by mad desire. Wanting her like I had never wanted anyone before.

She grabbed my hair and pulled hard as she came and I pulled out.

She recovered in a few moments.

I stood up and she sucked me with urgency.

“You have a tight package,” she said. “The tightest I have ever taken in my mouth.”

And she sucked one of my balls and then the other and put my cock deep into the back of her throat and I pushed it in a bit more and she didn’t protest.

And then she pulled it out and gagged and just sucked on the head.

“Your perfect cock in my mouth, just what I wanted today.”

I pulled out from her mouth and stroked myself as she licked my groin.

I felt the wet lashing of her tongue and it made me lose control. I pressed the tip of my cock against her closed lips and pumped her with hot cum. It is my turn to scream.

I kissed her forehead and then her mouth. I could taste my semen on her tongue.

I placed my cheek close to hers. Felt the warmth of our shared pleasure on it.

We lay on the bench, hugging, listening to each other’s breathing.

The cool night air heightened the memory of what transpired on our skins.

“Why hasn’t the watchman caught us yet?” she asked.

“He probably thinks the ghosts of the kings and queens are having a romp.”

The memory still fills me with warmth.

She looks at the electronic display for the flight details. “I must go now.”

There is sorrow in her eyes and I know I can't be the one who heals her pain.

I hug her.

He places both her hands on my lats. Runs it up and down.

"Gotta go," she says.

I kiss her, intensely.

She lets out a surprised sigh.

"I will see you in Dubai. I promise."

I let her go. She smiles and picks her luggage and walks towards the security check. She looks back once, waves and then she is gone.

26

The place is called ‘The Third Eye’. I do not expect cosmic revelations. Just a bar with a velvet furnishing and violet carpets that guide patrons to themed rooms where they can watch people fucking and if they are so inclined, join in the fun.

Martha squeezes my left bicep in excitement.

“Welcome,” the tall bouncer who is as wide as the doorway he is blocking, greets us.

I am asked to leave my phone in a container and frisked. Then its Martha’s turn.

I am asked to pay a large sum for both of us.

I was at a similar establishment in Paris, and I did not remember paying a fee. But then I arrived in an Aston Martin.

The man takes the money from my hand and stamps the symbol of an intense eye on our wrists. It is their logo. It watches your every move from the walls, the ceilings, from cocktail glasses, from the floor.

Martha squealed as we walked up to the bar. The décor was black and the lighting was blue. I felt like I was inside a jellyfish.

I order scotch and Martha a margarita.

In the lounge area, couples hold hands and talk and caress each other and watch people. Slowly they build the courage to walk hand in hand through corridors that lead to rooms with see through mirrors.

Martha attacks her first drink with urgency.

I smile at her and sip my drink like I am in no hurry.

“Are you excited?”

I say yes. I say I have been looking forward to this.

“Is this the craziest thing you have done?

“No.”

“There is much you can teach me. And I must know everything.”

“I am afraid if you knew the things I knew, you would be a threat to the very nature of reality.”

“I am a librarian, I am a threat to no one.”

I take her hand and lead her through the corridor. We enter the third room to the right and join another couple on the couch.

We watch a young African American man licking a middle aged woman between her legs.

The woman has her head thrown back; she is muttering things that cannot be heard.

The man’s cheeks are wet from her juices.

He makes a slurpy noise as he sucks in her clitoris.

Martha giggles.

“Are you my slave?” he says, when he finally lifts his face up.

“Yes, yes master.”

He stands up and places his large cock close to her face. She grabs it hungrily and runs her tongue around the head.

The room gets warmer. Martha places a hand on my leg.

“Can we join in?” she whispers.

“Tonight we watch,” I tell her. “One day soon, we will join in.”

The couple sitting next to us kiss each other. They are hipsters in their forties.

Martha looks at our neighbours and then the action unfolding through the mirror and back again.

The master deep throats his slave. She obliges.

“Show me how deep you can go.”

She shoves his meat in. And then pulls it out, his cock dripping with her saliva.

“Why don’t you spread that ass for me?” he says in his deep voice.

She squeezes her legs tight.

“Spread it,” he commands her.

“Will you hurt me?”

He pours lube into his hand from a bottle.

The woman next to us is moaning. Her partner is fingering her.

Martha digs her nails into my hand.

“Do you think he can fit it in her ass?” Martha asks me.

“I am sure she is dying to find out.”

The slave reluctantly spreads her legs and her ass cheeks. The man applies lube on her hole and gently penetrates her with one finger and then two. Then he uses two fingers to stretch it wide.

The slave gasps and shakes her head as he prepares her.

The hipster next to us fingers his woman faster and faster. The response he gets is, “Oh Yeah oh yeah, oh yeah.”

Martha digs in harder.

The master places the big black cock at the entrance.

“Do it, do it,” Martha mutters.

The master's face registers surprise at the tightness, as he enters her.

"Don't fight me," he says to woman staring at him in fear, in longing.

"Do it. Do it. Do it." Martha says.

He pushes it in and the eyes of the receiver roll up in its sockets and the woman next to us shouts as she comes. "Oh baby, oh baby, oh baby."

Martha's nails are so deep in my flesh that I bleed.

27

The day of my first journey.

I follow the instructions in my dream

I place the 5 stones, collected from our estate, around me to form a circle.

I am still not convinced they would open a gateway and help me transmigrate into the bodies of others. I am not convinced this will teach me anything, that this will in someway help me reverse my curse.

I sent all the workers home earlier, just in case. Just in case some rift in time and space would swallow the wealth of my father. All 50 acres of it - marble and sandstone and flowering trees and expensive cars and polished wood and bones and poisonous memories. And drag along with it the poor souls who have slaved for us for generations.

I am at the mercy of my curse.

Every time the portal opens, I must journey through bodies. Till I find her.

“You will know, in time,” Aardran had said.

The door is closed; candles light the room.

I sit in the centre of the circle.

I close my eyes.

Nothing happens for several minutes. I almost give up.

Then a deep sound fills my ears. It is the first sound in the universe, Aardran had informed me.

“You must reach out to it, connect with it,” he had said.

I hum to match the frequency of that sound till we are in perfect

unison.

I open my eyes.

The stones move gently at first, then they spin on the ground and they levitate and I rise up and join them in mid air and they encircle me like tiny moons.

The hum grows louder.

A bright warm light slowly bathes my form from head toe. And when it is done, I am someone else. In another place, in another time.

I am told this is my destiny. I am a Tantrik. I journey through bodies.

I am searching for you.

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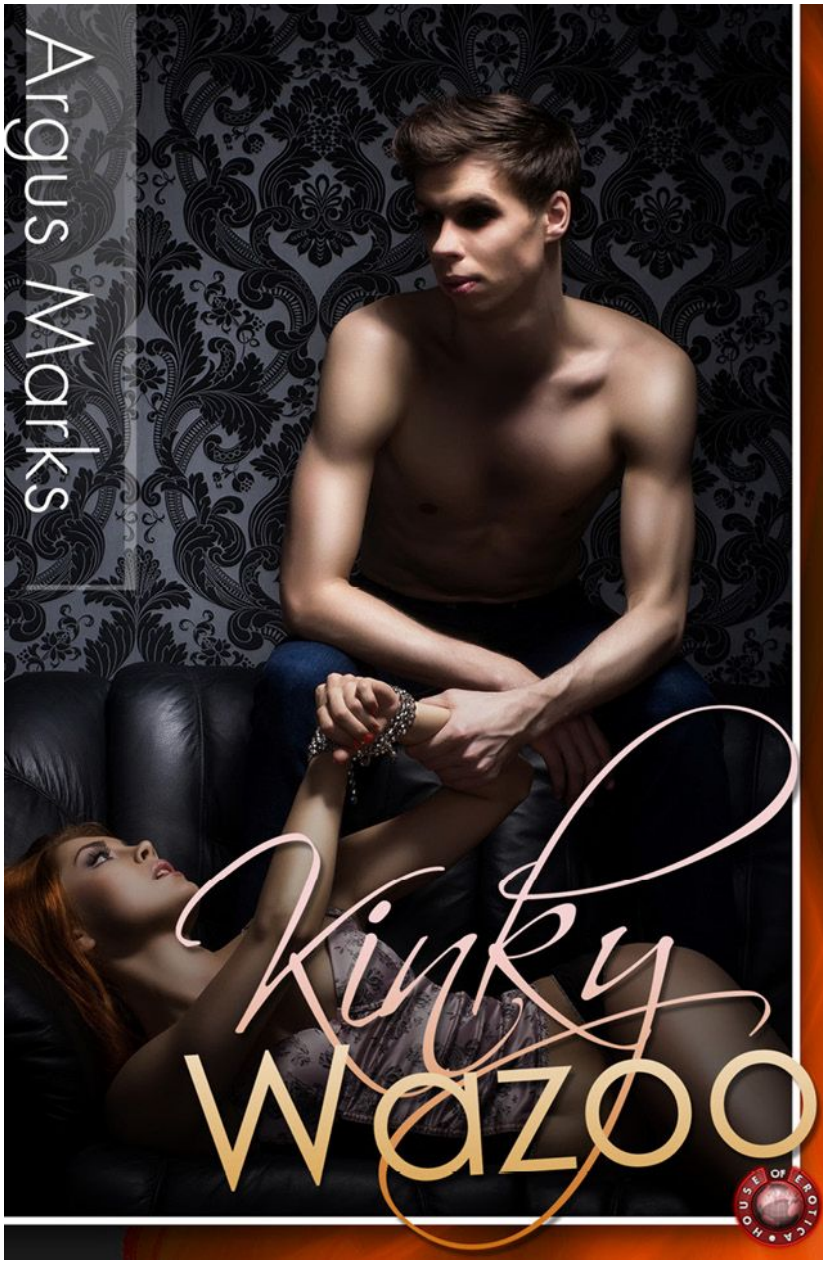

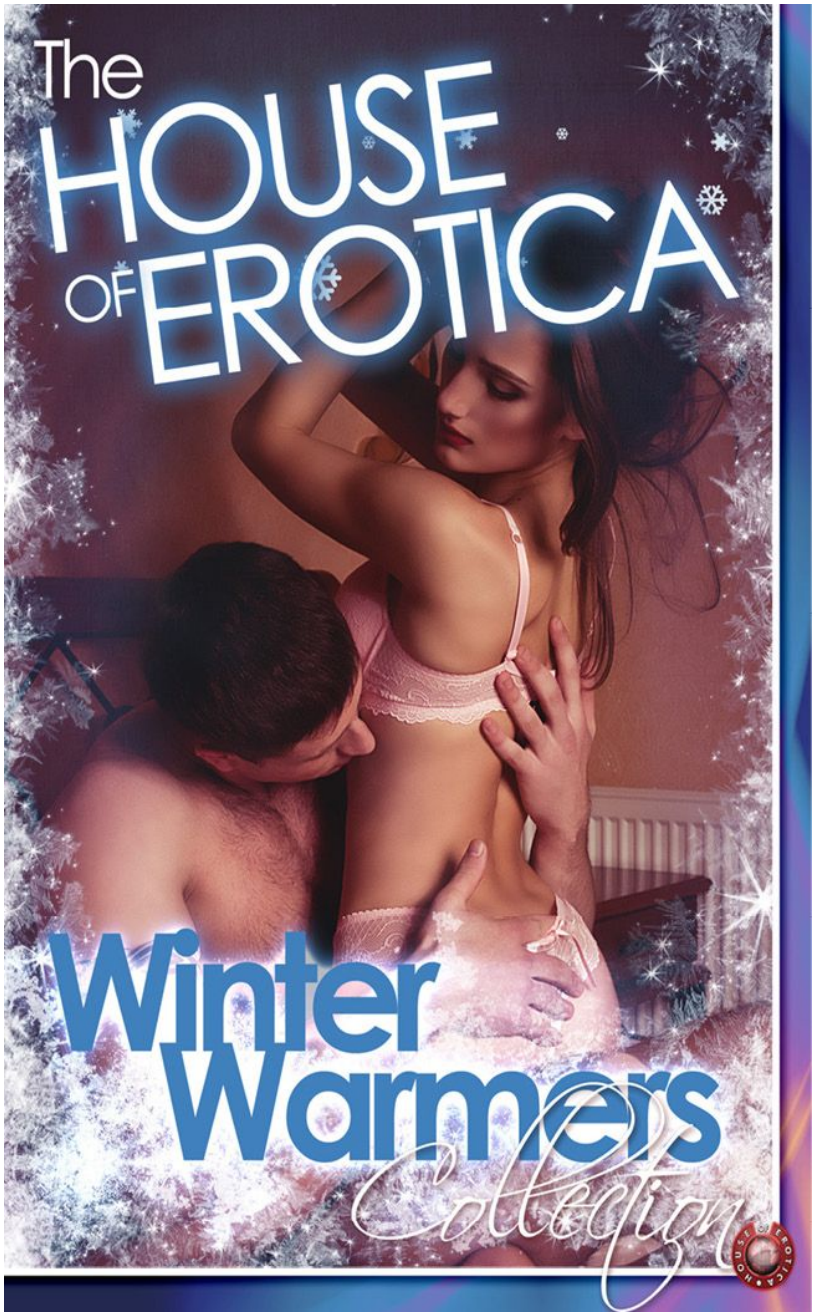
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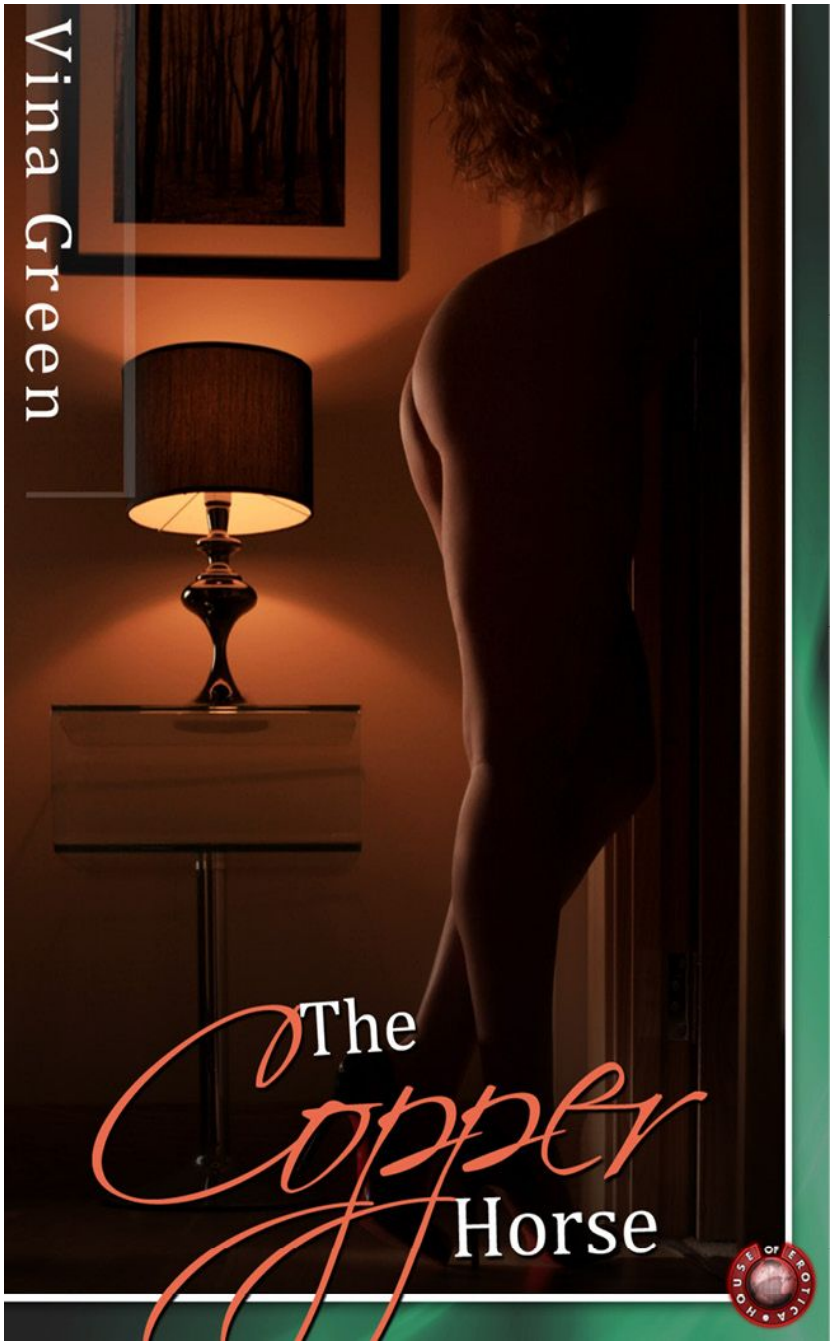
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